

outposts

No. 1

Edited by HOWARD SERGEANT

Contributors :

MAURICE LINDSAY
NICHOLAS MOORE
DOUGLAS GIBSON
ROBERT GREACEN

HOWARD SERGEANT
HENRY TREECE
KENNETH HOPKINS
SIMON WILKINS

ANDREW KEITH

Title Design : MARJORIE H. SNOWDEN

Introducing "OUTPOSTS"

This poetry folio has been established to provide a convenient platform for the younger writers. We are concerned not only with the publication of outstanding poetry at a reasonable price, but also in assembling those poets, recognised and unrecognised, who, by reason of the particular outposts they occupy, are able to visualise the dangers which confront the individual and the whole of humanity, now and after the war.

The future of "Outposts" will depend entirely upon the support we receive. We invite assistance in the form of subscriptions and contributions. All MSS (which should be accompanied by a covering stamp) will receive equal consideration whatever its form. We ask you to help us in making the venture widely known.

Acknowledgment is due to the Editor of "To-morrow" for the following poems: "Seed-time and Harvest," "To-day's Heroes."

Price : 1/1d. (*post free*)

Subscription : 4/4d.

IN MEMORY OF LESLIE HOWARD

MAURICE LINDSAY

BUT this one man we mourn amongst so many
because he died upon a gentle cause,
who had not marched with horror for an ally
nor levelled weapons to increase our loss.

The waves that joined across smashed fusilage
hid his green journey from our bloodhound eyes,
secured the sea's unfruitful patronage,
dropped seal upon the dossier of his days.

We who are harnessed in the limbs of killing
and cannot choose the act in which we move,
once honoured this man's intellectual spilling
of scorn upon the enemies of love.

So let us honour now his silent going,
whose gestures lent belief to muddled years,
who died upon his apex of unknowing
the hollow mocking on the heavenly stairs.

Thus we salute him for his gallant ending,
caught in this crazy whirligig of hate,
where scissored by a sword which knew his bending,
he fell between his courage and his fate.

THE PERSUASION

NICHOLAS MOORE

THE SEA, the unimpeachable sea of words,
Whose honesty one cannot doubt, why,
Why does it drown us ? And in that flood
How is it that we see so little good
For anyone ? It is as though the Word
Itself had turned stale, meaning nothing now.

It is these foolish and impressionable
Men for whom the orators spout. Once
They were superstitious, worshipped the weather,
Trees and natural signs. Now words evince
A similar adoration, flapped from the gums
Of blathering politicians. We see no further.

We see no further than the milky future
That these tongues paint like a heaven in the sky,
Profitable and teeming breasts of money
The good old mother earth gives : while they cry
Their hybrid words the truth seems what they say,
But afterwards we find there is not any.

SUNDAY EVENING

DOUGLAS GIBSON

ALMOST I can imagine, this Sunday evening,
With the church bells tolling gently
through the city,
That the war is an evil dream, and we have woken
Out of the strife and anguish, to find the happy
Land of our childhood unclouded by war's afflictions.
Though it was false, it is all we have ever known
Of peace and safety ; though even then
there was sown

The germ of war. And swiftly the years unfolded
Their beauty and pain, and suddenly we
were shrouded
In the doom to come. We struggled to undo
history,
But we were powerless, the fatal legacy left us
By politicians and profiteers and careless parents
Was ours without asking . . . Hearing these
bells again
I wake from dreaming, to know that their
peaceful sound
Mocks at my generation, scattered wide
Over the violent world, or under the ground . . .
Ah ! but our children now, all those who smile
So trustingly into our eyes, will one day hear
These same bells ring again, not with the guile
Of peace that is no peace, but very clear
Over this land, not marred by the drab of war,
Where they will walk upright and sing
Songs of a happy people that shall rise
Out of our struggle and our suffering.

SPEECH BEFORE WINTER

ROBERT GREACEN

IT COMES again. The spin to the year's end
Circles to its last full stop. I defend
The fires of autumn that purr on the ground,
The stacked-up leaves, the twitching gusts
that sound,
The drawn silences here in this island,
Where the slant and pace of life are still bland.
The autumn swerves with equable pulse,
But summer eyes have turned from joy long since
*O what's the use of limping sentiment,
That crinkles the shell of my still content,*

Who am more free when the great winds are loose,
More free when frames of mind restrict my choice ?
Wandering winterward as vagrant leaf,
Without the saving grace of hope or grief,
All my aloneness blossoms into pain,
Plots on my pattern's rim another stain.
Come, let me end this chapter ! let me close
The dog-eared chronicle that spites repose !
Exile from love's the only bitterness,
That gives this unmanned heart its trembling guess.
*O what's the use of limping sentiment,
That wrinkles the shell of my smooth content ?*

TODAY'S HEROES

HOWARD SERGEANT

ACCOUNT us not as heroes, who pass
this rugged way
To mount the hazards of our time so patiently,
So calm—We chose neither the conflict nor the day
That treacherously decked us in this livery,
Taught us to operate the modern instruments
Of war, and camouflage our bitterness and fear
Behind a jest.

No heroes ; we are the malcontents
Nurtured in heresy, who mined the harsh veneer
Of yesterday ; insurgents of the new tomorrow.
We toil not for the lucre of futurity
But for the cause of freedom ; and disdain to borrow
Glory backed by so worthless a security
As heroism, a pledge expediently neglected.

We venture only because we must, for life alone :
And when the monuments to Peace are re-erected,
Proudly, we still shall fight—for freedom of our
own.

SONNET

HENRY TREECE

BLACK the wind wailing in the future's voice
And the broken years falling piece by piece ;
The only music, hope in empty skull
And the old ones crying, crying under the hill.

Come morn or evening, it shall be the same,
The same feet moving in their wounded rhyme ;
Nor may it change till men do, never while
The unborn listen to the dead tongue's tale.

The young boy took a knife and cut the tree,
Then carved his weapon from the springing bough ;
But winter and the father sacked the sap
And struck the salmon as he made his leap.

So, deep in caverns you can hear them sing,
These eyeless who cannot remember Spring.

LOW VOICES MURMUR

KENNETH HOPKINS

IN THE kitchen the low voices murmur
but there is quiet in my room ;
the sound of them comes like distant rain
and my parched heart quickens.

And my love speaks low in my outer heart
until the unruffled emptiness within
and the cavernous quiet and the silence
wish to receive her.

THE UNDERGROUND GALLERY

SIMON WILKINS

"**H**ERE, in a seam,
in the depths of the earth,
move the élite of the land,
my son :
Here, there is no morning sun
to light the gloom—
Only the scarred limb
(a part of the wage)
and moving lip,
speaking of the myth."

... and the Royalties run
Up and Up and Up
while the startling
red of lip
part to create
a frustrated grin—
A colour scheme
of Red and White :
Silence and Serfdom,
Peace and Strength :
That, the fight !

... and the cycle of operations
goes forth—
Deaf, from the rattle
of the coal-machine :
Back and forth
with dust-filled throat
and the aching intensity
of the Sound—
the Thousand Tons
above the head—
Straining, working
at the pit-props.

“ But, asleep or awake
the minerals are owned,
my man !”

“ Myth, mere myth, my leader :
For the sake of a round of drink
take our all
our blood and life :
Break our backs—
Break the élite of the land.”

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST

ANDREW KEITH

AS WE have sown, so shall we reap, they say.
We have sown dragon's teeth,
and redly-dyed
Sprang up a host that fought and slew, till wide
The field of Earth in desolation lay,
And nought but blood and tears for reaping day.
And spectred Famine gaunt and hollow-eyed
Walked up and down, and little children cried.
The Reaper came, and looked—and went away.

Comes a new Spring, and seed-time in its wake,
And ploughmen on the land fresh furrows make.
To humankind another Spring draws near,
Shall we sow warring seeds of Want and Fear,
Or Peace, that when the Harvest comes again,
Earth's children may bind sheaves of ripened grain ?

*Printed by The Favit Press Ltd.
and published by
Howard Sergeant, 59 Orchard Avenue, Squires Gate
Blackpool.*